

**Regular Session Minutes – Selectmen’s Meeting  
Selectmen’s Meeting Room, Town Hall  
Monday, April 27, 2015, 7:30 p.m.**

**PRESENT:** Mark Siegenthaler, Chair; Margot R. Fleischman; William S. Moonan; Caroline Fedele; Michael A. Rosenberg; and Town Manager Richard T. Reed

**ALSO PRESENT:** Ben Thomas, Finance Committee; Youth and Family Services Director Sue Baldauf; Healthy Bedford Coordinator Carla Olson; David Enos, Susan Grieb, Terry Gleason, Peter Weichman Bicycle Advisory Committee; Sandra Hackman, Jeff Cohen, Planning Board; Suzy Enos; Jeff Stewart; James Shea; Laurie Gleason; Leonard Goodman; Anna Collins; Gail Green; John Monahan; Mark Silver; Bill & Sharon Young; Joel Parks; Ralph Hammond; Jamie Lewis; Ken Larson; Bob Sawyer; Jan van Steenwijk; Barbard Hitchcock; Amy Lloyd; Attorney Sam Coursey; Town Engineer Adrienne St. John; DPW Director Roy Sorenson; MassDOT Complete Streets Engineer Lou Rabito; Trish Domigan, VHB; Meredith McCullough, The Bedford Citizen; Mary McBride, Bedford Minuteman; Lindsey Bullen, Administrative Assistant

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Chair Siegenthaler called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

**15-242      Healthy Community Coordinator Update**

Youth and Family Services Director Sue Baldauf and Healthy Bedford Coordinator Carla Olson were present to discuss expanding local transit options and explain their recent research about a local circulator bus option as part of the Healthy Communities Implementation Grant they received. One option is to acquire a larger vehicle than the existing Bedford Local Transit (BLT) vehicle in order to expand capacity. Another option is to use the same vehicle but expand the operating hours to better serve the community. Economic Development Coordinator Alyssa Sandoval and Ms. Fleischman have been helpful in conducting research of other transportation options like the MBTA, the REV bus, and the Middlesex 3 shuttle as well as options used by other towns.

Ms. Olson conducted a survey to gauge citizen needs and desires for a bus service. She received 266 total respondents. There appeared to be a need on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons. Ms. Olson recommends that the bus operate five days a week.

Ms. Fleischman explained that she looked into Acton’s Crossbus Connect bus service that used a multi-town approach. It is a dial-a-ride program run by an outside firm which handles their dispatch and permissions. She explained that an outside firm handling the bus has more capacity, could adjust to demand, and has a computer based system that is more efficient.

There was discussion about where the funding for increased service would come from. Ms. Baldauf explained that the fares alone probably wouldn’t pay for the service. Discussion turned to whether advertising would be allowed on the vehicles as a source of revenue.

Ms. Olson explained that it is hard to do apples-to-apples comparison of the different services operated by other towns because they are run out of different departments in every town, are funded differently, and provide different services.

Ms. Olson provided the Selectmen with a local transportation needs summary from the transportation survey and a chart outlining the different circulator bus options and their estimated costs to operate.

Mr. Moonan pointed out that the survey shows where residents want to take the shuttle to, but doesn't consider where they will take the shuttle from.

Ms. Fedele highlighted that different groups in Town have different needs for the service to accommodate.

Cost is a major obstacle in trying to meet the needs of all groups. Ms. Olson believes that if the service only runs two or three days a week then it would be hard for people to get into the rhythm of including it in their routine.

There was discussion about who would be responsible for coordinating the new service. Mr. Reed explained that the Economic Development Coordinator position is a good starting point but does not have the capacity for the long term. Since Youth and Family Services has done so much research already then support from the department would be helpful and a good resource.

Mr. Siegenthaler said it doesn't make sense to him to try to expand the current BLT service at the expense of the existing BLT system which works for many residents the way it is set up now.

Mr. Reed explained that there is an advantage to working with Middlesex 3's shuttle because the first year is heavily subsidized by a grant and the creation of the shuttle is an important element of the Town's economic development. The shuttle will need more funding to be sustainable in upcoming years, so if the Town is willing to contribute then the shuttle will help serve the needs of residents.

#### **15-243      Proposed Minuteman Commuter Bikeway Extension Railroad Avenue Connection Alternatives**

The meeting moved into the Multi-purpose Room to accommodate the large number of people in attendance.

Trish Domigan from VHB was present to give their final recommendation for expanding the Minuteman Commuter bikeway down Railroad Avenue. Ms. Domigan gave a brief history of the project and summarized the facts of the project.

She then went on to present the current two options based on past input. Option 1 is the 'Complete Streets' concept. It would have two 6 ft. sidewalks, two 10 ft. travel lanes, two 4 ft. shoulders, and would be 40 ft. wide. It would require temporary easements and seven trees to be removed. Construction costs are \$1,300,000. There would be no environmental impact with this option. MassDOT will not fund it because it does not consider it a safe connection between the

Minuteman Bikeway and the Reformatory Branch Trail. Lou Rabito, the Complete Streets engineer, echoed the reasons why MassDOT would not fund it.

Option 2 is a shared use path. It would have one 10 ft. shared use path, a grass strip separating the path from the road, two 10 ft. travel lanes, two 2 ft. shoulders, one 4 ft. sidewalk, and would be 42 ft. wide. It would require a 2 ft wide land taking at Taylor and Lloyds as well as temporary easements. Ten trees would be removed but there are no other environmental impacts. Construction costs are approximately \$1,000,000. MassDOT would fund the project. The grass buffer strip would be 3.5 ft and if some type of railing is installed then the strip can be narrower.

There were questions from the public about the granite curbing location, whether there would be parking allowed on the street, and what would be done to increase visibility near the curve at the end of the road. Ms. Domigan explained that there will be signs on both sides of the road. An overhead signal will be installed that alerts a driver that someone is using the crosswalk. They would be activated by a pedestrian and it would be a flashing beacon. The light wouldn't stop traffic but would just alert the driver that someone is there.

There were then questions about land taking and easements. Ms. Domigan stated that the path would use a 2ft. easement. Mr. Siegenthaler explained that the houses at the far end of Railroad Avenue benefited from the Town providing additional land behind their houses that was public land in exchange for the developer allowing a 10ft. public easement in the front.

Ms. Domigan explained that these are the only two connectivity options being pursued. Other options required too much land taking, had large environmental impacts, or affected the parking and flow of traffic at the businesses.

Ms. Fleischman expressed concern about the project stalling further since so much effort has already gone into it. She believes Bedford benefits from the bike path and she doesn't want to jeopardize Bedford's reputation as a community that supports cyclists.

Ms. Fedele stated that she is very concerned about safety because of the location in a commercial district and is not comfortable with either option. She believes that the safety issues would outweigh the benefit of the extension and that the Town should not encourage more pedestrian traffic in that area.

Mr. Rosenberg endorsed the Complete Streets Option. He stated that he has to think the impact that the shared use path would have on the businesses is genuine. He wants Bedford to be known as a community that supports cyclists, but also wants to be known as a community that supports business.

Mr. Moonan stated that there is a lot to consider in the decision. He later explained that he has not come to a conclusion yet. He agrees with those who say we need to consider the interests of industry on Railroad Avenue but agrees with Ms. Fleischman about the Town's desire to provide support for bicycling and the bike path.

Mr. Siegenthaler stated that he agrees with Ms. Fleischman. There are commercial interests that need to be considered but the area is becoming more residential and there are now more pedestrians in the area.

No decision was made and the matter will appear again on a future agenda. The meeting then returned to the Selectmen's Meeting Room.

**15-245          Bedford Center for the Arts  
Request for Rent Relief**

The presentation for the Snow Removal Wrap Up was still being setup so the Selectmen decided to move forward with the Bedford Center for the Arts agenda item first.

Elizabeth Hacala, President and Executive Director of the Bedford Center for the Arts (BCA), was present to request rent relief. She explained that the organization ran into unexpected revenue problems. The space they rent at Old Town Hall includes three artist studios and a flexible program space. The rent for the space was mostly covered by the revenue from the studios and the remaining income was used to pay other operational costs. One tenant who had verbally agreed to rent two studio spaces decided to not rent the spaces. As a result, the BCA had to draw down their reserve to pay for the rest of the rent to the Town.

There was discussion about the challenges of attracting tenants to lease the studio spaces. BCA also explained their current programming and their plans for future arts events and classes to bring in revenue and enrich the cultural resources in Town.

Mr. Reed asked for clarification about some of the financial figures discussed in the BCA's memo. He explained that the Town would have to pick up the difference in operating costs for Old Town Hall. He also explained that the BCA's lease does not match the fiscal year because it expires in August.

**Mr. Rosenberg moved to waive the rental obligation at Old Town Hall for the Bedford Center for the Arts in its entirety through August 31, 2015 and beginning May 1, 2015. Ms. Fleischman seconded the motion.**

**The motion passed 5-0-0.**

**15-244          Department of Public Works  
Snow Removal Wrap-up**

Department of Public Works Director Roy Sorenson presented the Selectmen with a summary of snow removal efforts this winter. Mr. Sorenson explained that the Town has a snow plan in place that is followed whenever snow is expected. Winter operations can keep up with an inch an hour. Streets are plowed on a continuous basis during a snow event and there are 19 routes which cover a total of 70 lane miles. The Town has 26 pieces of equipment to help with snow removal and hired 19 contractors this year.

Salt brine was used this year and helped save on salt use. Salt brine is water saturated with sodium chloride that is applied 24-48 hours before a storm to pre-treat the roads. The Town tries to use sand as little as possible because it is hard to clean up and gets into catch basins.

Because of the large snowfall amounts, MEMA also helped with snow removal and was staged out of Bedford to help surrounding communities. Mr. Sorenson explained that an average storm is 6-8" and takes 18-24 hours to plow. This year, 102" fell from January thru February and there was a total of 121.5" of snow for the whole season. The average amount of snowfall is 58-60" a season.

The FY15 budget for winter operations is \$340,093. The actual cost to the Town this year was \$1,070,731. Extra expenses came from having to use the contractors for longer periods of time, needing to hold onto heavier equipment to help move snow, and needing police details during snow moving efforts.

#### **15-246 Selectmen Liaison Assignments**

Ms. Fleischman will become the alternate for the Strategic Communications Task Force. Ms. Fedele will become the liaison to the Planning Board. Mr. Siegenthaler will become the liaison to the Bicycle Advisory Committee. Ms. Fedele requested that in the future the Selectmen consider rotating liaison positions, having an alternate for the committee, or a creating a partnership on some committees so that two people can be the liaison.

#### **15-247 Miscellaneous Action Item**

**One Day Special Liquor License – Boston's Best Bartending Service, Inc.  
f/b/o Ranganarayan Narasimhan at the Bedford Plaza Hotel Hall – 5/30/2015**

**Mr. Rosenberg moved to approve the one day special liquor license for Boston's Best Bartending Service, Inc. f/b/o Ranganarayan Narasimhan on May 30, 2015 at the Bedford Plaza Hotel Hall contingent on the engagement of one police detail officer or agreement with the Police Department on a system that guarantees no uninvited guests. Mr. Moonan seconded the motion.**

**The motion passed 5-0-0.**

#### **15-248 Minutes**

**Regular Session Minutes- April 13, 2015**

**Mr. Moonan moved to approve the Regular Session Minutes of April 13, 2015 as amended. Ms. Fleischman seconded the motion.**

**The motion passed 5-0-0.**

#### **15-248 Town Manager's Report**

Mr. Reed had nothing new to report.

#### **15-249 Open Discussion and Selectmen Liaison Reports**

Mr. Rosenberg will attend the Middlesex Community College Graduation.

Mr. Rosenberg explained that Lexington is moving forward with plans to improve Bedford Street between the “jughandle” and 128 as they see it as the key to the economic development of Hartwell Avenue. There was discussion about what could be done to protect Bedford’s interests in the area and whether it will affect traffic in Bedford. Mr. Reed explained that it is still in the conceptual stage.

**Mr. Moonan moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Fleischman seconded the motion.**

**The motion passed 5-0-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 10:35